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## **SABRINA CARPENTER IS READY FOR ACT II**

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Sabrina Carpenter has more than [17 million followers on Instagram](#)—basically the population of a medium-size country—but she can typically walk down the street in anonymity. Only in 2019 can a 20-year-old who has starred in TV shows and movies and played her own songs to full arenas get away with no one stopping her for a selfie. “Listen, everyone’s famous nowadays,” she says with a laugh. “There are dogs that have more followers than I do.” But few of those would-be famous people (and none of the dogs) are as wildly multitalented or as busy as Carpenter. She’s part of a new generation of Gen-Z multitaskers, joined by the likes of [Billie Eilish](#) and fellow Disney star Dove Cameron, who broke out at a young age, buoyed by their massive social-media followings. With the July 19 release of her fourth album, *Singular: Act II*, Carpenter’s pivot to IRL megafame is here.

Homeschooled in Pennsylvania before moving to Los Angeles at 13, Carpenter initially seemed destined for the child-star route, appearing on a few shows and even competing at nine years old on the Miley Cyrus (yet another Disney alumna) online singing competition series [MileyWorld Superstar](#). Her big break came when she landed a role on *Girl Meets World*, the 2014 Disney Channel reboot of beloved 1990s sitcom *Boy Meets World*. Carpenter—then a precocious 14-year-old—was cast as Maya Hart, the sassy best friend to Rowan Blanchard’s earnest Riley Matthews. By the series’s 2017 cancellation, it had launched the careers of both of its leads. “It was such a beautiful experience, I wouldn’t have changed it,” Carpenter says of her time on the show. “But I was just about to turn 18, and I was really excited about moving on to the next thing.”

And she already knew what that next thing could be. Carpenter made time to pursue music outside of the show’s busy production schedule (plus her character had some singing scenes on the show), writing and recording her first two albums, 2015’s [Eyes Wide Open](#) and 2016’s [EVOLution](#), around her days on set. She’d use social media to promote both, building an online following that knew her for more than just her TV character. “Sometimes, especially with album releases, I want to get online,” she says. “I want to do a live chat. I want to see what people are saying.”



To be clear, Carpenter isn't one of those young celebs who make a name on TV only to announce they actually consider themselves singers; she has genuinely always been involved in both acting and music. Years before she started releasing albums while also starring in a TV show, Carpenter was a nine-year-old [posting covers of Adele](#) and Christina Aguilera songs to YouTube. When she was 10, her father built her a purple recording studio in the basement of their home, where it remains today. ("That's where I really found comfort in a creative space," she says.) At just 12 years old, she signed with her first record label. "I want people to be able to listen to my music and feel like they're wearing an outfit they love; it gives you that different posture, energy, attitude."





But she didn't give up on acting. With the roles she picked post-GMW, Carpenter proved she was more than a bubbly teen TV star. The best known of these was her turn as Hailey in 2018's groundbreaking [The Hate U Give](#), an adaptation of the [Angie Thomas novel](#). The story follows Starr, a young black woman (Amandla Stenberg) who is torn between her low-income, predominantly black neighborhood and her affluent, mostly white prep school. Hailey is Starr's school bestie who, in a critical moment, fails to recognize her own privilege at great cost to her friend. "I was just waiting for a project that would stop me in my tracks, and that was it," says Carpenter. The film was lauded for its approach to issues like prejudice and police brutality and even landed Stenberg the cover of *Time* magazine. But playing Hailey meant Carpenter had to field Twitter comments from fans like "Your acting was amazing, but Hailey really got on my nerves tonight" and "You played a great racist."

Staying open while also maintaining a healthy distance from social media can be a challenge for anyone, but it's especially hard when you have millions of people watching your every post. To try to maintain some control, Carpenter aims to respond to only positive messages on social media, in the hope that it encourages those reaching out to her to keep things light and, as she puts it, "shift the energy of the Internet." "They're always telling me I need to hydrate and rest. It's very cute that they care," she says of her fans. But living at the height of cancel culture—when one wrong tweet can bring on an onslaught of online criticism and even permanently damage young careers—can make for some intense pressure. "Sometimes I will literally post something and then just leave. Ghost. Throw my phone in the ocean. Completely MIA," she says. "It's the easiest way for me to not see what they're saying—good, bad, negative."



That balance is going to be crucial as she releases what she calls her most personal album yet. As a musical artist, Carpenter (who writes all of her own songs) has already headlined three tours and played Madison Square Garden. But *Singular: Act II* feels distinctly vulnerable: One track, called “In My Bed,” (watch the new music video for it, below) is about how she copes with the anxiety that occasionally plagues her. Though she doesn’t like to talk about it much—“It’s very hard to define it; it comes in waves”—writing about her darker moments has been cathartic. “I have to constantly remind myself that I’m doing what I love and there’s so much to be grateful for,” she says. “I was able to channel that into some of these songs.”

Up next, Carpenter will join the Netflix romantic-comedy revival in the movie *Tall Girl*, about a teenage love triangle, and then she stars in the Alicia Keys dance-comedy film *Work It*. Plus, she's planning a world tour behind her latest record. Oh, and she's already writing a new album. In between all that, she might make time for a social life, like hanging out with her [BFF, \*The Actstar\* Joey King](#). She also says she wants to plan a trip to London soon, because as a renowned Potterhead she hopes to visit some of the sites from the films. But even with a dizzying array of future plans, Carpenter is leaving room for the unexpected. "I look forward to being surprised," she says. "I just have to throw little Easter eggs out at the universe and see which ones it brings back."